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ABSTRACT

Although the national education goals announced in February 1990 were influenced by the goals defined by the Quality Education for Minorities Project, the recommendations of the project did not influence the administration's America 2000 strategy for achieving the goals. America 2000 does not address the problems that make it almost impossible for many low-income minority children to perform well on the very achievement tests the strategy calls for. America 2000 promotes educational choice, a strategy that will not benefit significant numbers of low-income children, and it does not address multicultural education. The proposed "New American Schools" are not likely to benefit minorities. Instead, every school must be a school of choice in its high expectations and holistic approach to change. Early intervention, restructuring, curriculum development, and the recruitment of better qualified teachers are essential for all American schools. Integral to a strategy for change are: (1) establishing a vision, (2) setting standards, (3) doing analysis, and (4) acting to strengthen the schools. An appendix summarizes research on mathematics and science education for minorities. (SLD)

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ED 378 248

SOME FACTUAL INFORMATION AND COMMENTARY ON THE STATUS OF EDUCATION OF MINORITIES AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF AMERICA 2000 AND OTHER PROPOSALS PUT FORWARD TO ACHIEVE THE NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS

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*NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS FOR THE YEAR 2000**

- ALL CHILDREN IN AMERICA WILL START SCHOOL READY TO LEARN.
- THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE WILL INCREASE TO AT LEAST 90%.
- AMERICAN STUDENTS WILL LEAVE GRADES FOUR, EIGHT, AND TWELVE HAVING DEMONSTRATED COMPETENCY IN CHALLENGING SUBJECT MATTER INCLUDING ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, HISTORY, AND GEOGRAPHY; AND EVERY SCHOOL IN AMERICA WILL ENSURE THAT ALL STUDENTS LEARN TO USE THEIR MINDS WELL, SO THAT THEY MAY BE PREPARED FOR RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP, FURTHER LEARNING, AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT IN OUR MODERN ECONOMY.
- U.S. STUDENTS WILL BE FIRST IN THE WORLD IN SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT.
- EVERY ADULT AMERICAN WILL BE LITERATE AND WILL POSSESS THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NECESSARY TO COMPETE IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY AND EXERCISE THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENSHIP.
- EVERY SCHOOL IN AMERICA WILL BE FREE OF DRUGS AND VIOLENCE AND WILL OFFER A DISCIPLINED ENVIRONMENT CONDUCIVE TO LEARNING.

*-ESTABLISHED BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE GOVERNORS IN FEBRUARY 1990

AMERICA 2000: WHAT'S IN IT FOR MINORITIES?

Some Highlights:

- September 1989 - National education summit involving the President and the governors was held in Charlottesville, Virginia

- February 1990 - President George Bush and the governors to establish national education goals to be achieved by the Year 2000 for every child, every adult, and every school in America.

- April 1991, more than a year later, President Bush announced *America 2000*, a four-part strategy, as the administration's plan for achieving the national education goals.

- What is in *America 2000* for minorities? For example, will *America 2000* enable every minority child to start school ready to learn; to leave the fourth, eighth and twelfth grades with demonstrated competencies in English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; and to attend a school that is free of drugs and violence?

- It is important to distinguish between the national education goals (established by the President and the governors in February 1990) and *America 2000.* (a broad strategy for achieving the national education goals developed by the administration and announced in April 1991 by President Bush).

- Although the national education goals, announced in February 1990, were influenced by the goals contained in the report of the MIT-based Quality Education for Minorities Project (*Education That Works: An Action Plan for the Education of Minorities),* its 58 recommendations clearly did not influence the administration's *America 2000* .

- *America 2000 is a* four-part strategy:
  - better and more accountable schools
  - a new generation of American schools
  - a nation of students
  - *America 2000* communities

- It envisions a very limited implementation role for the federal government:
  - setting standards
  - highlighting examples
  - contributing some funds
  - providing flexibility in exchange for accountability
  - "pushing and prodding-then pushing and prodding some more"

- The strategy does not, for example, provide for:
  - the $4.5 billion needed annually to ensure full funding of Head Start
  - the $1.6 billion required annually to fully fund the WIC Program

- The strategy calls for the development of a new set of "voluntary" tests (American Achievement Tests) to be administered at the fourth, eighth, and twelfth grade levels to measure achievement in core subjects.

- *America 2000* does not address the problems that make it almost impossible for many low-income minority children to perform well on such tests:

  (1) low per pupil expenditures in predominantly minority schools;
  (2) the tracking of low-income minority students disproportionately into low-level classes in reading, mathematics, and science beginning in elementary school;
  (3) the poor quality of instruction, the weak curriculum, and the inadequate resources available in the schools these children attend; and
  (4) unsafe learning environments.

- *America 2000* promotes educational choice for parents and students, a strategy that will not benefit significant numbers of children from low- income families and will only further segregate our schools.

- *America 2000* is silent on multicultural education: it fails to call for an education that enables all students to recognize and value the contributions to America's greatness made by all racial and ethnic groups that make up this country; it ignores the need for an education that binds rather than divides.

• *America 2000* calls for the creation of 535+ (at least one per Congressional district) schools referred to as "New American Schools" whose design, development, and funding are all under the control of the private sector. How likely are these 535+ schools to reach the children most under-served by our current system when there are almost 1000 schools in the predominantly minority New York City school district alone and more than 5000 schools in the 22 largest (predominantly minority) school districts in the country?

EDUCATIONAL/PARENTAL/SCHOOL CHOICE

Every school must be a school of choice. All children and youth need and deserve a quality education. Educational vouchers, whether for use in public or private schools, work against making this a reality because:

- There are not enough "schools of choice", either public or private, to ensure that the educational needs of all children are met.

- Very few, if any, "schools of choice" will be in low-income neighborhoods.

- Even if low-income parents have the information and the confidence to seek to enroll their youngsters in such schools, these schools will be outside of their community, increasing the likelihood that their children will be isolated in a non-supportive and unfamiliar setting.

- It is the "school of the choice" that decides which students it will accept. The incentive to admit students who may not be adequately prepared to schools who measure their value by average standardized test scores is not clear.

Therefore, the goal must be to make every school a school of choice, beginning with those located in the resource-poor neighborhoods.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO ENSURE QUALITY EDUCATION FOR LOW-INCOME AND MINORITY STUDENTS

We must ensure that minority children start school prepared to learn and that, once in school, they receive a quality education in an environment of high expectations.

We must ensure that these students leave school with the skills necessary to successfully pursue post-secondary education in fields of interest to them or to enter the work force fully prepared to be successful.

We must adopt broad new strategic principles as well as replicate and scale up specific existing programs that have proved effective in meeting the educational, health, and emotional needs of children and youth at various levels along the educational continuum.

Any such strategy must be holistic, viewing each part of the educational experience (pre-/post-natal, early childhood/pre-school, elementary/middle school, high school/undergraduate, and graduate/professional) as linked to the next. Success depends upon many factors:

1. Early intervention to ensure:
   - a healthy start for minority children
   - that parents are effective in their roles as first teachers of their children
   - full funding of such programs as the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and Head Start
   - the training and licensing of day care and other early childhood workers

2. Restructuring our public schools to shift major responsibility for education to local schools whose success will be measured on the basis of student achievement.

3. The elimination of tracking as a pedagogical strategy and replacing it with more effective approaches such as cooperative learning and group study.

4. The establishment of core competencies at the elementary school level that all children will be expected to achieve.

5. The existence of a rigorous high school curriculum with the opportunity for all students to take advanced course work.

6. A curriculum that reflects, respects, and values the cultural contributions of each of the racial and ethnic groups to which the children belong.

7. The creation of incentives to attract a larger number of talented minorities to the teaching profession.

There are other actions that we must take as well.

We must ensure that provisions for quality education for minorities are explicitly included in plans to restructure schools, upgrade teaching standards, and reform undergraduate education.

This means that minorities must assume leadership roles in educational reform. If we are present and participating, we can insist that adequate resources be allocated, that the curriculum be rigorous and pluralistic, and that the best teachers be made available to those who need them the most.

We must insist that effective educational strategies be broadly publicized and replicated for the benefit not only of minority children but for all children.

We must ensure that the public understands and appreciates the fact that quality education for minorities is essential to improving education for all students.

We must have an educational system in place that values and holds high expectations of minority youth and that inspires families and communities to take greater responsibility for the education of their children, for raising

expectations, and for promoting the values of discipline and hard work required to succeed in school, in the work place, and as citizens.

A restructured system can be achieved by using:

- existing resources more efficiently
- a fraction of the proposed cuts in the defense budget to finance the needed educational improvements
- the billions of dollars spent annually by the private sector to re-train entry level workers to finance public education instead
- using the millions of dollars spent by colleges and universities on remedial programs for under-prepared college students to ensure high quality K-12 public education instead.

We must understand that expenditures on human resources are high yield investments, not just budget costs.

We must form partnerships on several levels across the educational pipeline, with students and faculty at predominantly minority institutions joining with other community organizations to help provide support to parents, teachers, and students in local schools. There should be a special focus on housing developments and low-income communities. These partnerships must be:

- across racial and ethnic groups to ensure that the needs of all children are known and met; and
- across local, state, and regional boundaries with school districts, colleges and universities, national laboratories, and business and industry joining together to ensure quality mathematics, science, and engineering education for minority groups seriously under-represented in these fields.

VISION OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL SYSTEM

The majority of low-income families must look to the public schools to equip their children and youth with the knowledge and skills required for future success and security.The role of the public schools as equalizer and provider of equal educational opportunities is especially critical to their children's future well-being.

The public school system we envision instills in its students an appreciation of such life long values as:

- Experiencing the pleasure of using one's mind to solve problems and come up with ideas.
- Knowing the self-satisfaction and pleasure in doing a project well.
- Appreciating and respecting one's own accomplishments as well as those of others.
- Appreciating the importance of the role of the family in one's life.
- Being willing to work with others toward a common objective.
- Having the self-confidence to make decisions based on one's own ideas and experiences.
- Respecting points of view that may be different from one's own.
- Accepting people different from oneself, and having interest in learning about their cultures.
- Taking responsibility for doing things that need to be done and doing them well, from beginning to end.
- Understanding that helping others is a responsibility and is its own reward.
- Being committed to honesty, truth, and self-discipline.
- Understanding that learning is a life-long process and the best way to have the most control over one's life.

In this vision, public schools develop, in partnership with parents and the local community, an understanding and appreciation in their students of democratic values, citizenship responsibilities, and the work ethic. Graduates are fully prepared to be successful in the workforce or college, and not in need of remedial education. We envision legislation that will help reform public schools so that they will be able to fulfill their mission for <u>all</u> students.

The environment envisioned would hold high expectations for all students and would respect and value the culture of every child in school. Such a system would create incentives that make the best teachers available for those who need them the most, would strengthen the bonds between schools and communities, would offer a rigorous academic curriculum, would provide access to social and cultural enrichment in and outside of school, and would help to revitalize the traditional faith within minority communities and families in the power of education to advance their children.

The main characteristics of the environment envisioned include:

- a strong core curriculum
- competent and motivated teachers
- extensive parental/community involvement in schools
- use of effective and innovative teaching strategies
- access to state of the art instructional technology
- year-round enrichment
- systematic assessment of student progress
- systematic exposure of students to career options
- a special emphasis on mathematics and science

A strategy follows for changing a school system that every school in it is a school of choice.

A STRATEGY FOR CHANGING A SCHOOL SYSTEM SO THAT EVERY SCHOOL IS A SCHOOL OF CHOICE

ESTABLISH VISION

- **Establish a Vision/Purpose of Education in the community**

  [E.g., preparation for: citizenship; life in a community; the workplace; higher education; and life-long learning]

  [Decide on themes/magnets/small learning communities]

  [Take steps to ensure a common vision of the purpose of education within the community]

SET STANDARDS

- **Set Standards to be Met in Each Area**

  [Set up groups for each area: community; pre-college and higher education community; business community]

  [Decide on such matters as student-teacher ratios; teaching standards; student performance standards; curriculum and facilities standards; parental/family and community performance standards]

  [Publicize and discuss standards in: community meetings; parent/teacher meetings; school meetings]

DO ANALYSIS

- **Do Demographic Analysis to determine:**

  Number of elementary, middle/junior high, high schools needed

  [To meet student/teacher ratios, age distribution of students, themes/magnets, and small community of learners]

  Number and caliber of teachers needed

  [To meet certification standards, discipline balance, level of experience, and motivation/expectations desired]

- **Categorize, at each level (elementary, middle/junior high, and high) existing schools:**

  Category I: Meeting desired standards now

  Category II: With support available, can meet desired standards in <u>three years or less</u>

  Category III: With support available, can meet desired standards in <u>five years or less</u>

  Category IV: Without massive infusion of resources, cannot meet standards in five years

- **Determine whether vacancies exist in Category I, II, and III schools for each part of the pipeline**

  [Cardinal Principle: make no transfer/decision that will weaken the receiving school]

- **Identify teacher needs in Category I, II, and III schools**

ACT TO STRENGTHEN

- Transfer Category IV students to fill all vacancies in Category I, II, and III schools

- Transfer per student expenditure with each student to her/his new school

- Consolidate Category IV schools and transfer the best Category IV teachers to those schools; close the rest

- Take any freed up resources and use to open new schools (that meet desired standards) needed at a particular segment of the pipeline to meet demographic demands

- Take staff development funds in school system's budget and send teachers to local universities who can meet system standards for teachers through a one year or less, full-time, professional development program

  [Work out one-year professional development program with the local universities that already have strong teacher preparation and enhancement programs]

- For teachers who cannot meet the standards within the one-year period, offer
  (1) leave of absence without pay for further study at their expense until they meet the standards;or
  (2) early retirement, where appropriate. Do not re-hire until study under option (1) is complete.

- Move to strengthen Category III, Category II, and finally Category I schools.

APPENDIX

RESEARCH FINDINGS REGARDING MINORITY STUDENTS' PREPARATION FOR AND ACCESS TO QUALITY MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE AT THE PRE-COLLEGE LEVEL

ACCESS TO COURSES

- Mathematics and reading in the elementary years, and mathematics and science, in the middle years are the critical filters that separate children into tracks, with low-income and minority youth disproportionately placed in low-level classes.
- The practice of tracking has a fundamental impact on what students study and thus what skills they have an opportunity to master, particularly in mathematics. Several recent research findings underscore this point, as outlined in the report: National Science Board (NSB) Science and Engineering Indicators, 1991 Tenth edition.
- Blacks, Hispanics, American Indians, and low socioeconomic status eighth grade students are twice as likely as white students to be in remedial mathematics classes.
- Minority access to high-track science and mathematics classes diminishes as the minority enrollment at their school increases.[1]
- Even when minority students attend racially mixed schools they are more likely than their white peers to be placed in low-track classes.[2]
- The proportion of high-ability classes increases significantly as the proportion of white students increases.
- Minorities tend to have less access to "gatekeeping" courses at their schools, that is, courses that are especially important in qualifying students for college-level work in science and mathematics.
- Eighth grade algebra, ninth grade geometry, and high school calculus courses are considered "gatekeepers" because of their importance in the science and mathematics curriculum.
- Students attending predominantly white schools have far greater opportunities to take these gatekeeping courses.
- This access is critical as found in a study by Pelavin and Kane[3] -- they found that the best determinant of future college attendance was enrollment in high school geometry.
- Among students who took geometry, Pelavin and Kane found that gaps in college attendance rates all but disappeared: 80 percent of black students in this group attended college, along with 82 percent of Hispanic students and 83 percent of whites. Even for students at the poverty level, taking geometry halved the gap in college attendance.

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[1] Oakes, J., *Multiplying Inequalities: The Effects of Race, Social Class, and Tracking on Opportunities to Learn Mathematics and Science*; Santa Monica, CA, The Rand Corporation, 1990.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Pelavin, S. and Kane, M., *Changing the Odds: Factors Increasing Access to College*, New York, College Entrance Examination Board, 1990.

RESEARCH FINDINGS REGARDING MINORITY STUDENTS' PREPARATION FOR AND ACCESS TO QUALITY MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE AT THE PRE-COLLEGE LEVEL

ACCESS TO QUALIFIED TEACHERS

- Low-income and minority students have less access than other students to the best qualified science and mathematics teachers.
- In 1987, only 39 percent of the teachers who taught low-ability classes in low SES (socioeconomic status), minority, inner-city schools were certified to teach science and mathematics at the secondary level, compared with 84 percent of the teachers at high-wealth, predominantly white, suburban schools.
- Low-track students in the most advantaged schools (high SES, white, suburban) were more likely to have better qualified teachers of science and mathematics than high-track students in the least advantaged schools (low SES, high-minority, inner-city)
- Low-track students from middle school most often enroll in academically thin general and vocational tracks in high school into which they are counseled.
- Not surprisingly then, many minority and poor students do not perform well on standardized tests and are only marginally prepared when and if they complete high school.
- If they continue in higher education, the majority will attend community colleges from which they will not likely transfer. [In 1986, only 28.7% of all 2-year college students had transferred to a 4-year college by October, 1983. For Blacks, only 18.35% had transferred, the lowest for all groups.]